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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2282

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 000577

DEPT PASS TO WHADP COLLECTIVE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/14/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [EUN](#) [CU](#)
SUBJECT: PANAMA: CUBA DEMARCHE DELIVERED ON HUMAN RIGHTS
AND DEMOCRACY

REF: SECSTATE 71974

Classified By: CLASSIFIED BY POLCOUNS BRIAN R. NARANJO 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) POL met with MFA human rights officer Janio Tunon to discuss respect for human rights and the need for democratic change in Cuba. POL encouraged Panama to engage in dialogue with Cuba and promote the human rights benchmarks set by the European Union. Tunon stated that Panama's relationship with Cuba was based on commercial ties and trade, asserting that Panama would not push Cuba to discuss "sensitive political matters." Tunon highlighted that Raul Castro's economic reforms demonstrated progress towards a liberal market economy, his regime would evolve at its own pace, and Cuba would not be influenced by external players.

Comment

¶2. (C) Panama is loathed to engage on human rights and democratic change in Cuba. Tunon's response to this demarche was a complete regurgitation of Panama's views on its engagement with the Cuban regime. While often holding itself out as a "valid interlocutor" with the regime, Panama is unwilling to carry water regarding respect for human rights and the need for democratic change.
MESA